

Abolish patents, abolish monopolies. Key points of an alternative system.

Yes, patents are monopolies granted and enforced by the state. The state cracks down on any company, institution or individual that, without permission, tries to use, distribute or improve a certain technology which monopoly (patent) has been granted to a certain organization (patent holder). Basically that is how patent holders become monopolists and rentiers. And people wonder why medications are so expensive or why the development of some important technologies is halted by patent holders with nefarious interests...

There are some ways of funding the research and development of technologies with copyleft licenses:

- **Multi-group organizations, foundations, etc.** can be created in order to gather the material and human resources needed. In this way, many companies, institutions and individuals can join forces in the endeavor of researching and developing new technologies. The results of this research and development would be publicly available so all the companies, institutions and individuals in the free market could use and improve these breakthroughs. In turn, part of the profits that companies would get after using these technologies could be used (via donations, collaboration and taxes) to fund new projects in a virtuous cycle.

This requires a change in the philosophy of business. A company is not necessarily a predatory entity designed to maximize profit. Alternately, **a company can be an instrument for social transformation.** So much so that cooperatives and non-profit organizations have a tremendous potential that hasn't been fully unleashed yet. Companies with a strong sense of social responsibility should have a prominent role in the public's eye and should be supported as such by governments and society as a whole. Consequently, **legislators can create incentives** for this system of cooperation in the field of R&D, and companies that participate in it can be rewarded.

- **Crowdfunding, donations, government subsidies** can certainly help in order to gather more resources. At the end of the day, these technological achievements would benefit society in general.
- But there is one more instrument that is still unexplored: **the use of monetary policy and financial regulations to fund these R&D projects.** We live in a system in which the elites get 0% interest rate loans while the rest of the population has to pay high interest rates. It is what Max Keiser would call an "interest rate apartheid" or "financial apartheid". This is one of the causes of the outrageous increase in wealth inequality (along with the patent system, the consolidation of oligopolies, tax loopholes, revolving doors, privatizations, corruption, etc.), as the rules of the economic game are rigged. In an alternative system, this situation could be reversed. So much so that even debt-free money could be issued to fund specific projects within a limited scope in order to avoid high inflation (also, inflationary forces could be tackled through taxation of specific operations).
- **Taxation on the wealth of the economic elites that profited from the old system** would also help.

But let's not be naive. Those who have profited from the old rigged system (patent holders, big bankers, the one percent) would try to wage war on the population, on legislators and on governments. Contingency plans would have to be prepared for various scenarios in order to deal with this threat.

R.I.P. Aaron Swartz. Glory to GNUkind.

